



- Up Words # 31

"THE UNOPENED GIFT"



You're not sure what to do with it. Christmas has now come and gone and New Years is upon us and yet it sets there all by itself beneath the withering tree or on a shelf in the closet. It is the unopened gift. Someone who was supposed to have it didn't get it. Perhaps our big day-after-Christmas blizzard kept them from attending that post-Christmas get together you had planned. Or maybe they were kept from coming to your family gathering due to an unfortunate accident or an unexpected illness. Now all you have to remind you of them is that unopened Christmas present. That's really too bad.

Sadly, one of your expected guests or relatives may have just decided not to come. You didn't know they weren't coming. In fact you expected them, hence the gift. You would think they might have let you know or informed you of a change of plans but lo, no such explanation, not even a lousy excuse. They've treated you rudely and now even if they did show up at some point you're not sure you would want them to have the unopened gift. Indeed the next time you see them it might very well seem awkward.

I wonder how the Father God feels about unopened gifts? John 3:16 tells us that God loved us so much that He gave us His only Son so that whoever believes in Him will have eternal life. Unfortunately some refuse God's Son and say "no" to God's gift, it remains unopened. Some simply ignore the gift or offer lame excuses for not opening it - at least not right now.

And yet, God's gift is more significant than any we could ever offer, in fact, it is lifesaving. Would anyone refuse a lifesaver? Amazingly, some do! Romans 6:23 warns of the hazard of not opening that gift. That verse tells us that the wages of our sin is death which is eternal separation from God. The good news is that the end of the verse says that "the free gift of eternal life is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Fortunately God's gift of forgiveness from sin and eternal salvation is never withdrawn. Unlike me, who might be hesitant to give a gift to one who treats me rudely or offers lousy excuses, God is gracious and patiently waiting for all to open His gift. (See I I Peter 3:9). So, have you opened the gift? Or does it still set there under Calvary's tree, unopened?

Looking Up!
Pastor Chuck Circle